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Perhaps if it had had a perfected mechanism it would not have shown the gift of style.

J. T. SHOTWELL.

*The Franco-Prussian War and its Hidden Causes.* By ÉMILE OLLIVIER. Translated from the French with an introduction and notes by GEORGE BURNHAM IVES. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. 1912. Pp. xxxvii, 520.)

A QUERY addressed by Mr. Ives to M. Ollivier (as to the possibility of extracting from the latter's voluminous history of the Second Empire the story of the Hohenzollern candidacy for the throne of Spain and of the negotiations that immediately preceded the Franco-Prussian War) led the ex-premier to make up the book which Mr. Ives has translated. By adding notes and appendixes, drawn in part from the author's larger work, in part from other sources, the translator has made himself virtually editor. His labors have greatly increased the usefulness of the volume, for in many instances he gives us parallel and variant accounts of the same episodes, and, in the later appendixes, he reprints some important documents.

The title of the book arouses expectations that are not fulfilled. M. Ollivier reveals no causes of the Franco-Prussian War other than those that have been known for many years. For the period which the volume covers in detail—the first half of the month of July, 1870—his narrative is a primary source; but the points in which it varies from the narratives previously published are of minor consequence. The interest of the book, both to author and to reader, lies in the interpretation of the facts. M. Ollivier's theses may be stated as follows: (1) that he was not personally responsible, either by act or by omission, for the outbreak of the war; (2) that the French government was not responsible; (3) that the war was deliberately forced upon France by Bismarck; and (4) that it was an unnecessary war. The order in which these theses are here stated fairly represents their relative importance in M. Ollivier's mind, as indicated by the amount of space he has devoted to each. It seems desirable, however, to examine them in the reverse order.

It may doubtless be shown that few wars would have been fought if the nations and governments concerned had acted rationally. It is probable that the Franco-Prussian War could have been avoided if the majority of the French people had shared M. Ollivier's view that German unity was a German question, that France could not claim "revenge for Sadowa", and that a united Germany constituted no menace to French interests. It is, however, a notorious fact, which M. Ollivier corroborates, that the majority of the French people—the majority, at least, of those Frenchmen who made themselves audible—felt very differently. It is equally notorious that few Germans believed German unity attainable without a French war. Given this state of mind on either side of the Rhine, and behind it the memories of centuries of conflict, and it

seems hardly conceivable that war should not have broken out, either in 1870 or soon after.

It is really not so much the causes as the occasions of the war of 1870 to which M. Ollivier devotes chief attention.

That the renewal of the Hohenzollern candidacy for the throne of Spain in 1870 was Bismarck's work and was calculated to provoke French hostility; that the withdrawal of the candidacy crossed his plans; that the form in which he published King William's refusal of guarantees, creating as it did the impression of a more abrupt and definitive breach than had really occurred, and placing the French government in a position from which it could not retreat without loss of prestige, practically brought on the war—all this is now generally admitted by German historians. From these facts, however, it does not follow, as Ollivier maintains, that Bismarck was solely responsible for the war. Nothing that Bismarck did would have made war inevitable if the French had not been in a belligerent frame of mind. When the matter was laid before the Chamber, Thiers—who, as Ollivier justly remarks, had done as much as any one man to create in France feelings hostile to Germany—said that France was “going to war on a question of sensitiveness”.

What Bismarck really did was to force in 1870 a war which Napoleon was preparing for 1871. In 1869 Napoleon had conducted direct negotiations with the Emperor of Austria and the King of Italy for an alliance against Prussia. In May and June, 1870, French and Austrian experts elaborated plans for an 1871 campaign against Prussia. “The fact”, Ollivier tells us (p. 89), “that no formal treaty of alliance had been concluded proves that the war took us by surprise *and was not premeditated by us.*” Down to the clause which the reviewer has italicized, the statement is true and illuminating, but the final clause leaves one gasping. Ollivier of course attempts (except in one passage, presently to be noted) to minimize the importance of these negotiations. Of the military consultations he tells us nothing. Mr. Ives gives us a foot-note on the subject (p. 39), but does not furnish adequate references to the sources and literature.

Ollivier's defense of the French government is hampered by his prime purpose, that of self-defense. In clearing his own skirts he leaves those of the emperor and of other Frenchmen entangled. Thus, in endeavoring to show that he did not accept the chances of war lightly or inconsiderately, he tells us that the letters of Emperor Francis Joseph and King Victor Emmanuel indicated the existence of a “moral alliance” (p. 89). Of the demand for guarantees, framed by Napoleon and Gramont without his knowledge, he says that it “could be interpreted only as a purpose to bring on war” (pp. 224, 225). And when he appealed to the ex-emperor, through Prince Napoleon, for protection against Bon-apartist attempts to make him the sole scapegoat, he obtained the following authoritative résumé of the situation: “If I had not wanted the war, I would have dismissed my ministers; if the opposition had come from them, they would have resigned; finally, if the Chamber had been forced

into the enterprise against its will, it could have voted against it" (p. 363, note 1).

That Ollivier should not be held responsible for the war is fairly clear. The proof of his guiltlessness, however, is not to be found solely in the examination of his acts and omissions during the critical first two weeks of July. The really conclusive proof is to be read between the lines of his book, and it is the more convincing because he gives it unintentionally. He shows us everywhere that neither his official position nor his force of character enabled him to make war or keep the peace. Premier in an ostensibly parliamentary government, he was in fact only a figure-head. The emperor had reserved the direct control of foreign affairs (pp. 83 *et seq.*). During Ollivier's entire term of office diplomatic negotiations were carried on by Napoleon personally. It was not until July 6, 1870, that the premier heard anything of the 1869 negotiations for alliances; it was not until 1875 that he heard of the military consultations held in 1870 (p. 39, note 1). Finally, as we have seen, Napoleon and Gramont framed, on July 12, the fatal demand for guarantees, without consulting Ollivier or the other ministers (p. 218). The emperor similarly kept in his hands the control of the army. The minister of war did not report to the council, but directly to the emperor (pp. 83, 84). Ollivier had to depend on Napoleon's assurances as regarded alliances, and on Le Bœuf's assurances as regarded the condition of the army. The expectations that were then aroused he cannot yet regard as illusory; witness his pathetic attempt to show how the French armies might have triumphed, if— (pp. 395, 396).

Ollivier's mental lucidity at critical moments, his independence of outside influences, and his force of character are certified to us by Ollivier himself (pp. 51, 52). To the reviewer this paragraph seems the most significant in the volume; and it is interesting to read, in connection with it, Ollivier's censure of Benedetti's self-esteem (pp. 133, 134). Had Ollivier possessed the qualities he ascribed to himself, he might perhaps have exercised, despite his disadvantageous political position, a dominant influence upon the movements of events. His own narrative, however, does not exhibit these qualities in decisive action. We see the light of his intelligence focused on words rather than things, and more on the way of saying things than on the substance of the things said. We see his course determined by a number of extraneous influences: the vacillations of the emperor, the actions of his colleagues, the opinions of diplomatists, the remarks of deputies, the utterances of the journals. This, of course, he did not see at the time, nor does he see it now. Like Faust in the *Walpurgisnacht* he thought himself impelling when he was impelled.